

STATEMENT OF THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) An insulating structure comprising:

an elongate shank extending in a longitudinal direction, said shank being formed of a first insulating material and having a first outer surface; and

at least one shed extending transverse to the longitudinal direction of the elongate shank, said at least one shed being formed of a second insulating material and having a second outer surface;

wherein at least a portion of said first outer surface of said shank is defined by a patterned texture including an array of substructures selected from protuberances and concavities which are formed in said first insulating material of said shank, and

wherein at least a portion of said second outer surface of said at least one shed is defined by a patterned texture including an array of substructures selected from protuberances and concavities which are formed in said second insulating material of said at least one shed.

2. (previously presented) An insulating structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said shank has a circumference, and said array of substructures formed in said first insulating material of said shank is spaced around the circumference of said shank and longitudinally along said shank.

3-11 (cancelled)

12. (previously presented) An insulating structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said substructures formed in both said first insulating material of said shank and said second insulating material of said at least one shed have at least one of a spherical, ellipsoidal, paraboloidal, hyperboloidal, conical and symmetric shape.

13. (previously presented) An insulating structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said array of substructures that define said first outer surface of said shank is arranged such that the surface area of said first outer surface is substantially constant per unit length along the longitudinal direction of said shank.

14. (previously presented) An insulating structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said array of substructures that define said first outer surface of said shank is arranged such that the surface area of said first outer surface has a defined variation per unit length along the longitudinal direction of said shank.